For the development of the year 1 phonics screening check

Year 1 phonics screening check

Framework for pilot in 2011

Department for Education

About this document

What is this document about?

This document provides the framework for the development of the year 1 phonics check, including the check specification and the item specification.

Who is this document for?

- This document is primarily aimed at those responsible for developing the phonics screening check, providing detailed information to ensure an appropriate check is developed.
- The document may also be of interest to schools involved in the pilot in June 2011 and other education professionals.

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Contents

1. Introduction

The Government is committed to establishing a check of phonic decoding at the end of Year 1 and to making the results of this check available to parents.

In response to the public consultation on the introduction of the check, the Government confirmed its intention to develop a check, which will be piloted in summer 2011, with a view to full national roll-out in 2012. The check will be focused solely on decoding using phonics. The check will confirm individually whether pupils have learned phonic decoding to an appropriate standard by the end of Year 1 and identify pupils who need additional support from their school to catch up.

1.1 The purpose of the year 1 phonics screening check

The purpose of the check will be to confirm that all pupils have learned phonic decoding to an age-appropriate standard.

Pupils who have not reached this level should receive extra support from their school to ensure they can improve their decoding skills, and will then have the opportunity to retake the check.

We will explore through piloting whether data from the check can be reported in more detail so that information can be provided on whether pupils have grasped the basics of phonics even if they have not met the appropriate standard for pupils at the end of Year 1.

Use of data

After full national roll-out the following uses will be made of the data:

- Individual pupils' results will be made available to parents, so that parents are kept informed about their child's progress in developing word reading skills.
- School-level results will be recorded on RaiseOnline, and made available to Ofsted for use in inspections.
- The school-level results will not be published in performance tables.
- Report on national results to track standards over time.
- Report National and local authority results to allow schools to benchmark the performance of their pupils.

The impact of the Year 1 phonics check

- It is hoped that the Year 1 phonics check will encourage schools to pursue a rigorous phonics programme for all pupils at the start of primary school.
- The check should identify pupils who have not learned to decode using phonics by the end of

Year 1. These pupils will then receive additional support to ensure they can improve their decoding skills.

- By promoting the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics and identifying pupils who need extra support, it is hoped that introducing the check will lead to an increase in the number of pupils able to read competently by the time they reach the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

Accurate evaluation of the potential impacts of the phonics screening check will not be possible during the pilot because the data from the check will not be made available in the ways specified above. However, the impact on schools will be monitored over the early years of roll-out.

2. Content standards

The final content standards will be agreed as part of the standard setting process through the pilot. However, it is expected that these will be in line with similar expectations of performance in systematic synthetic phonics programmes. The following statements should be seen as a guide to assist in the development of items.

By the end of Year 1 pupils should:

- Give the sound when shown any grapheme that has been taught (see section 3.2 for details of the expected graphemes).
- Blend phonemes in order to read words.
- Know most of the common grapheme-phoneme correspondences.
- Read phonically decodable one-syllable and two-syllable words.

2.1 Non-assessed content standards

The introduction of this check in no way underestimates the importance of teaching wider reading skills. All pupils should be taught to read for meaning and pleasure throughout primary school. The evidence shows phonics teaching is most effective when taught as part of a language-rich curriculum. Introducing a check of phonic decoding in Year 1 does not mean that teachers should delay teaching pupils wider literacy and comprehension skills.

However, the assessment of comprehension will not be included in this check. Assessing only phonic decoding will help to limit the assessment requirements at the start of primary school. Key Stage 1 assessments will continue to cover wider aspects of reading and writing.

Since this check is a decoding check, only words that are phonically decodable have been included. It is expected that teachers will ensure that elements of early reading not assessed in this check are also taught, such as reading and discussing books. The following statements indicate additional skills that pupils should possess by the end of Year 1 but that will not be included in the check.

By the end of Year 1 pupils should:

- Apply phonic knowledge and skill as the prime approach to reading unfamiliar words that are not completely decodable
- Read many frequently-encountered words automatically.
- Read phonically decodable three-syllable words.
- Read a range of age-appropriate texts fluently.
- Demonstrate understanding of age-appropriate texts.

It is vital that pupils are given the opportunity to develop these skills throughout Year 1, in addition to developing phonic decoding skills.

3. Check specification

This section details the content and cognitive domains for the check and starts with a high level overview of the check.

3.1 Check structure

There will be some practice words for pupils before the check begins. These words should help familiarise pupils with the activity and provide some easier words to ease pupils into the check. These words will have the orthographic structure VC and VCC. The practice words will not be scored.

The check will be constructed of 20 real words and 20 pseudo-words, although these numbers are subject to change following piloting. The pseudo-words provide the purest assessment of phonic decoding because they will be new to all pupils, and so there will be no unintended bias based on visual memory of words or vocabulary knowledge. The pseudo-words will be presented with a picture prompt (for example a picture of an imaginary creature) at the start of the check and pupils will be asked to name the type of creature. This approach makes it clear to pupils that they are reading a pseudo-word, which they should not expect to be able to match to their existing vocabulary. The real words will include between 40% and 60% less common words, which pupils are unlikely to have read previously. Less common words are included so that the majority of pupils will need to decode using phonics rather than rely on sight memory of words they have seen before. Pupil performance on real words and pseudo-words and more and less common words will be investigated, so that any significant differences in the ability of pupils to read these types of words can be assessed. The exact balance of real words and pseudo-words for the check during roll-out will be determined on this basis.

The check will be made up of two sections with items in each section relating to specified elements of the content domain. Items within each section will be ordered according to orthographical representation. Each section will contain 20 items, although this is subject to change following piloting. It is necessary to start with easier words in section 1 to make the check accessible and to provide some information to teachers if their pupils are unable to decode relatively simple words. However, the words at the end of the check are around the level of difficulty we expect pupils to reach by the end of Year 1. These check items will provide greater information on whether pupils are working above or below the expected standard. A number of validity and reliability studies will be conducted during the pilot in order to demonstrate that the check is fit for purpose and meets the requirements of the Ofqual regulatory framework for statutory assessments. A list of the validity and reliability studies to be conducted, including a brief description, is given in appendix A.

In the pilot, the forms of the check will not necessarily contain every letter of the alphabet or grapheme-phoneme correspondence listed in this document. However, it is anticipated that during roll-out each check will include all single letters of the alphabet and over 5 years, all grapheme-phoneme correspondences listed in this document will be included.

Inclusion of a particular grapheme will not necessarily be in proportion to its frequency in words that are appropriate for pupils at the end of Year 1 (for example, the letter ‘t’ will not necessarily appear more frequently than the letter ‘x’ even though it is more common in words experienced by pupils at the end of year 1).

In each check, no bigrams will be included which have been classified as low frequency, no more than 25% of bigrams will be classified as medium frequency and the remainder will be classified as high frequency. Classification of bigrams as low, medium and high frequency is given in appendix B.

Each check will ensure that the number of words that are in the orthographic ‘neighbourhood’ of a word with just one letter change (neighbourhood size) is varied to ensure a variety of neighbourhood sizes in the check since this is known to affect a pupil’s ability to respond, particularly to pseudo-words.

Pseudo-words will not be homophones for real words: for example we would not use the pseudo-word ‘beek’.

The two-syllable words assessed will be real words because of the difficulty of inventing polysyllabic pseudo-words with limited alternative pronunciations that can be reliably scored. This is an issue for two-syllable words because of the effects of stress placement on vowel pronunciation.

All letters in the check will be lower case.

The standard version of the check will contain 4 words per page in a list. Schools will be allowed to modify the check by changing font, font size and format to enable access to the check for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). See section 6 for more information.

3.2 Content domain

The content domain for the year 1 phonics check is defined in the two sections below

3.2.1 Section 1

Section 1 will contain words using the following grapheme-phoneme correspondences.

a	/æ/	b	/b/	c	/k/	d	/d/	e	/ɛ/
ar	/ɑː/			ch	/tʃ/			ee	/iː/
				ck	/k/				
f	/f/	g	/g/	h	/h/	i	/ɪ/	j	/dʒ/
ff	/f/								
k	/k/	l	/l/	m	/m/	n	/n/	o	/ɒ/
		ll	/l/			ng	/ŋ/	oi	/ɔɪ/
								oo	/uː/ & /ʊ/
								or	/ɔː/
p	/p/	qu	/k//w/	r	/r/	s	/s/ & /z/	t	/t/
						sh	/ʃ/	th	/θ/ & /ð/
						ss	/s/		
u	/ʌ/ or /ʊ/	v	/v/	w	/w/	x	/k//s/	y	/j/
z	/z/								
zz	/z/								

Section 1 will contain words with the phonological/orthographical configurations as defined in table 1 below. In the table, the following codes are used:

Phonological	Orthographical	
C = consonant or consonant digraph[1]	C = consonant	CC = consonant digraph[1]
V = vowel or vowel digraph[2]	V = vowel	VV = vowel digraph[2]
		VCV = split digraph[3]

Table 1

Phonological representation	Orthographical representation	Real word examples
C V C	C V C	cat
	CC V C	this
	C V CC	mash
	C VV C	moon
	CC V CC	shall
	CC VV C	charm
V C C	V C C	act
C C V C	C C V C	pram
	C C VV C	greed
	C C V CC	clock
C V C C	C V C C	bend
	C VV C C	feeds
	CC V C C	chips

Section 1 in the pilot will contain a total of 20 words, 8 real and 12 pseudo-words.

For the pilot, section 1 will contain:

- 3 x CVC (orthographical) pseudo-words (3 words)
- 1 x VCC (orthographical) pseudo-word (1 word)

[1] A consonant digraph contains two consonant letters to represent a single phoneme (for example, ‘sh’ or ‘ck’). We have also designated ‘qu’ in section 2 as a special case consonant digraph despite the fact that its pronunciation contains two phonemes.
[2] So that this table is easy to interpret, we have included r-controlled digraphs (such as ‘er’ and ‘ur’) in the over-arching category of vowel digraphs. A vowel digraph may contain two vowel letters (such as ‘oi’ or ‘ee’).
[3] A split digraph will contain a vowel letter followed by a consonant letter and then an e.

- 4 x real words and 4 x pseudo-words for the five orthographical representations of the CVC phonological representation (i.e. all excluding CVC orthographical representation) listed above (8 words)
- 2 x real words and 2 x pseudo-words for the three orthographical representations of the CCVC phonological representation listed above (4 words)
- 2 x real words and 2 x pseudo-words for the three orthographical representations of the CVCC phonological representation listed above (4 words)

The pseudo-words in each section will be grouped together.

3.2.2 Section 2

This section will contain words using the following grapheme-phoneme correspondences (those in bold were not included in section 1).

a	/æ/ & **/ɑː/**	ar	/ɑː/	b	/b/	c	/k/ & **/s/**		
a-e	**/eɪ/**	**au**	**/ɔː/**			ch	/tʃ/ & **/k/** & **/ʃ/**		
ai	**/eɪ/**	**aw**	**/ɔː/**			ck	/k/		
air	**/eə/**	**ay**	**/ai/**						
d	/d/	e	/ɛ/ & **/iː/**	**er**	**/ɜː/** & **/c/**	f	/f/	g	/g/ & **/ʤ/**
		ea	**/ɛ/** & **/iː/**	**ew**	**/uː/**	ff	/f/		
		ee	/iː/					h	/h/
		e-e	**/iː/**						
i	/ɪ/ & **/aɪ/**	**igh**	**/aɪ/**	j	/ʤ/	k	/k/	l	/l/
i-e	**/aɪ/**	**ir**	**/ɜː/**					ll	/l/
ie	**/aɪ/** & **/i/**								

m	/m/	n	/n/	o	/ɒ/ & **/əʊ/**	or	/ɔː/		
		ng	/ŋ/	**oa**	**/əʊ/**	**ou**	**/aʊ/** & **/uː/** & **/ʌ/** & **/əʊ/**		
				o-e	**/əʊ/**	**ow**	**/aʊ/ & /əʊ/**		
				oi	/ɔɪ/	**oy**	**/ɔɪ/**		
				oo	/uː/ & /ʊ/				
p	/p/	qu	/k//w/	r	/r/	s	/s/ & /z/		
ph	**/f/**					sh	/ʃ/		
						ss	/s/		
t	/t/	u	/ʌ/ or /ʊ/ & **/j//uː/**			v	/v/	w	/w/
th	/θ/ & /ð/	**ue**	**/uː/ & /j//uː/**					**wh**	**/w/**
		u-e	**/uː/ & /j//uː/**						
		ur	**/ɜː/**						
x	/k//s/	y	/j/ & **/aɪ/** & **/ɪ/** & **/iː/**			z	/z/		
						zz	/z/		

This section will contain one-syllable words with the phonological/orthographical configurations as defined in table 2 below using the same codes as in section 1.

The orthographical configurations CCVVC and CVVCC are repeated in the section to assess the additional vowel digraphs included in section 2.

Table 2

Phonological representation	Orthographical representation	Real word examples
C V	C VV	say
	C VVV	lair
	CC VVV	thigh
C V C	C VV C	head
	C V C V	mate
	CC V C V	shame
C C V C	C C V C V	stove
	C C VV C	bread
	CC C V CC	thrush
C V C C	C VV C C	joust
C C V C C	C C V C C	clump
	C C VV C C	clowns
	CC C V C C	shrink
C C C V	C C C VV	spree
C C C V C	C C C V C	scrum
	C C C V C V	scrape
C C C V C C	C C C V C C	strict

The two-syllable words will contain a variety of phonological/orthographical configurations with between 5 and 8 letters.

Section 2 will contain a total of 20 words, 12 real and 8 pseudo-words.

For the pilot, section 2 will contain:

- 2 x real word and 2 x pseudo-word for the orthographical representation of the CVC phonological representations listed above (4 words).
- 2 x real words and 2 x pseudo-words for the four orthographical representations of the CVCC and CCVC phonological representations and the two orthographical representations of the CV phonological representation listed above (4 words).
- 2 x real word and 2 x pseudo-word for the three orthographical representation of the CCVCC phonological representations listed above (4 words).
- 2 x real words and 2 x pseudo-words for the four orthographical representations of the

CCCV, CCCVC and CCCVCC phonological representations listed above (4 words).

- 4 x two-syllable real words with different orthographical representations, one with five letters, one with six letters, one with seven letters and one with eight letters (4 words).

3.3 Cognitive domain

To respond correctly to the items in the Year 1 phonics check, pupils need to be familiar with the content domain being assessed, but they also need to draw on a range of cognitive skills. Describing these skills plays a crucial role in the development of any assessment, since they are vital in ensuring that the check covers the appropriate range of cognitive skills across the content domains already outlined.

The first domain, 'knowing', covers the facts, concepts, and procedures pupils need to know, while the second, 'applying', focuses on the ability of pupils to apply knowledge and conceptual understanding to read words.

3.3.1 Knowing

The ability to decode phonically depends on knowledge of and familiarity with grapheme-phoneme correspondences and the rules for blending. This knowledge is dependent on the pupils being phonemically aware and having secure knowledge of the letters of the alphabet. Phonemic awareness is defined as explicit ability to reflect upon and manipulate the sounds in words. Knowledge of the alphabet includes recognising each letter as a discrete identity. Specific knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences (and phoneme-grapheme correspondences) is dependent on being able to map. The more relevant knowledge a pupil is able to recall and the wider the range of decoding rules he or she has understood, the greater the potential for reading a wider range of phonically decodable words. Pupils need to be able easily to recall the basic facts and conventions of phonic decoding in order to read unfamiliar words.

3.3.2 Applying

The applying domain involves the application of knowledge to a range of phonically decodable words in order to be able to read fluently. Pupils should have confidence in segmenting and blending using appropriate pronunciations of phonemes for the given context.

4. Item specification

This section of the document provides more detail on the nature of each item, how difficulty will be defined and how items will be reviewed before inclusion in a check.

4.1 Item structure

As described in section 3.2, the words in the check will follow set orthographical configurations. This section will provide additional details for each word type in relation to form and structure. All word configuration representations in this section (i.e. CVC, CCVVC) are orthographic rather than phonological.

All real words will be checked for frequency in the Children's Printed Word Database maintained by the Department of Psychology, University of Essex. All real words in the check will be found in the database and the check will contain between 40% and 60% of real words that are low frequency, defined as fewer than 20 occurrences per million words in the database.

In addition, in the check overall between 40% and 60% of the words will have a low neighbourhood size (N), defined as N<5. Neighbourhood sizes have been derived from Medler, D.A., & Binder, J.R. (2005). MCWord: An On-Line Orthographic Database of the English Language. http://www.neuro.mcw.edu/mcword/.

No words used in the check will contain unigrams (single letters) in word positions where they are unusual or impossible in English (for example, words will not end with a j or begin with an x); similarly, no words will contain bigrams (sequences of two letters) in word positions where they are unusual or impossible in English (for example, words will not end with kt or begin with mn). In each orthographic word type, there will be a mixture of high and medium frequency bigrams. Appendix B provides further details of acceptable and non-acceptable unigrams and bigrams, as well as details of the set of consonant clusters selected for use at the beginning or end of words. When selecting words for the check, consideration will be given to the neighbourhood size of each word.

4.1.1 CVC words

The three CVC words in section 1 of the check will all be pseudo-words and will contain only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1.

4.1.2 CCVC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCVC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1.

4.1.3 CVCC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CVCC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1.

4.1.4 CVVC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CVVC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1 and at most two CVVC words (one real and one pseudo) in section 2 of the check, containing the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.5 CCVCC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCVCC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1.

4.1.6 CC VVC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CC VVC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1.

4.1.7 VCC words

There will be one pseudo VCC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1.

4.1.8 CCVC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCVC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1.

4.1.9 CCVVC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCVVC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1 and at most two CCVVC words (one real and one pseudo) in section 2 of the check, containing the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.10 CCVCC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCVCC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1.

4.1.11 CVCC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CVCC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1.

4.1.12 CVVCC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CVVCC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1 and at most two CVVCC words (one real and one pseudo) in section 2 of the check, containing the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.13 CCVCC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCVCC word in section 1 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.1.

4.1.14 CVV words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CVV word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.15 CVVV words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CVVV word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.16 CC VVV words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCVCV word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.17 CVCV words

There will be one real and one pseudo CVCV word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.18 CC VCV words

There will be one real and one pseudo CC VCV word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.19 CCVCV words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCVCV word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.20 CCVCC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCVCC word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.21 CCCVCC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCCVCC word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.22 CCCVCC

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCCVCC word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.23 CCCVC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCCVC word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.24 CCCVV words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCCVV word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.25 CCCVCV words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCCVCV word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.26 CCCVCC words

There will be at most one real and one pseudo CCCVCC word in section 2 of the check, containing only the graphemes listed in section 3.2.2.

4.1.26 Two-syllable words

There will be 4 two-syllable words in the check which will have a range of orthographic structures and will contain a maximum of 8 letters. There will be no compound words.

4.2 Item piloting and item difficulty

Before an item is included in a check, it will undergo formal piloting (either through a separate pilot or as part of live testing). In the pilot year, a total of 360 items will be piloted in the proportions needed for the check (for example, 3 out of every 40 items will be CVC pseudo-words). The design for the pilot will be determined in conjunction with psychometricians but is intended to provide approximately 1000 observations for each item in a crossover or cartwheel design with 18 forms.

During the pilot, a variety of item response theory (IRT) models will be used to analyse the data from the pilot and calculate difficulty and discrimination for each item on a common scale to determine the most appropriate for this check.

4.3 Item review

Items developed for inclusion in the check will be reviewed to ensure they are suitable.

4.3.1 Real words

Each real word should be reviewed to ensure the following:

- The word meets the requirement of the specification.
- The word is phonically decodable, taking into account regional accents.
- The word does not have an inappropriate meaning colloquially or in a regional dialect.

4.3.2 Pseudo-words

Each pseudo-word should be reviewed to ensure the following:

- The word meets the requirement of the specification.
- The word is phonically decodable, taking into account regional accents.
- The word is not a homophone in English.
- The word is not a homophone for an inappropriate word in another language covered by the review (common words in other languages should also be flagged although it may still be deemed appropriate to include these words).
- The word is not used colloquially or in a regional dialect.

5. Administration arrangements

The Year 1 phonics pilot will take place in mid-June and must be administered by a teacher. In many schools, this will be the class teacher, although a school may decide to use the literacy coordinator for this role.

It is expected that check administration for a class can be conducted in a single day, although schools may choose to organise administration as they see fit. In the pilot year, face-to-face training will be provided to all participating schools to ensure standardisation. Following roll-out, general guidance for administrators will be made available online in advance of the check, however, any specific guidance relating to scoring of a particular item will be made available with the check to preserve confidentiality (see section 7 for further information on scoring).

Final administration arrangements for the national roll-out of the reading check will be determined after further consultation.

The check should normally take between 5 and 10 minutes to administer, including the completion of all related administrative tasks. Pupils should be given appropriate opportunity to access all elements of the check (see section 6 for further information on access arrangements). If a pupil is struggling with the check, the administrator may decide to stop the check before the end, however, pupils should be given full opportunity to show what they can do.

If a pupil does not achieve the required standard in the check, the school will be expected to put in place a programme for the pupil to ensure that they are able to decode using phonics and catch up with their peers. During roll-out, pupils who do not achieve the required standard will be expected to re-take the check during Year 2. Details of the re-take arrangements will be confirmed following the pilot.

For the pilot year, all check materials will be collected from the school at the end of the administration window.

6. Access arrangements

The full range of appropriate access arrangements available in other national tests is available in the phonics screening check. Schools should base decisions on appropriate access arrangement for each pupil based on normal classroom practice. For pupils with SEN, schools should seek advice from a SENCO.

6.1 Rest breaks and additional time

There is no time limit for the check, and pupils should be given sufficient time to respond to each item. Most pupils will be able to complete the check in one sitting. However, if pupils are unable to complete the check in one sitting, the check may be broken into smaller chunks and each administered separately. A rest break should normally be taken at the end of a page (i.e. every four words).

6.2 Modified versions of the check for pupils with SEN

The standard version of the check will be produced on white paper, laminated, using the Sassoon Infant font, font size 55, bold. An electronic version of the check will be made available to schools in order for them to make modifications as required. These modifications may include increasing the font size, reducing the number of words on a page, printing on coloured paper or removing the pictures. It is for schools to decide the most appropriate format for their pupils.

Braille (grade 1) versions of the check will be available on request.

If a pupil has SEN, schools may administer the check on screen or through other electrical or technical aids if this is the usual medium for reading for the pupil.

6.3 Use of sign language

Pupils using British Sign Language (BSL) will be able to respond to real words using sign language.

In the pilot, we will explore how pupils with hearing impairments who use BSL are able to respond to the pseudo-words and develop advice for national roll-out accordingly.

6.4 Access arrangements that are not permitted

Since this is a test of phonic decoding, it is not appropriate for pupils to have the use of a reader. The use of an amanuensis or transcript is not necessary since the pupil is not expected to record anything in writing.

7. Scoring and reporting

7.1 Scoring

The check should be scored by the administrator as they work through the check. For each word, the administrator will record whether the pupil read the word correctly or not bearing in mind the following points:

- Pupils may sound out phonemes before blending.
- Pupils may elongate phonemes as long as they are blended to form the word. However, if pupils leave gaps between phonemes and do not blend them, this must be scored as incorrect.
- Alternative pronunciations must be considered when deciding whether a response is correct. For real words inappropriate grapheme-phoneme correspondences should not be marked correct (for example, reading blow to rhyme with cow would be incorrect). However, alternative pronunciations of graphemes will be allowed in pseudo-words.
- A pupil's accent should be taken into account when deciding whether a response is acceptable. There should be no bias in favour of pupils with a particular accent.
- Any pronunciation difficulties for a pupil should be taken into account when deciding whether a response is acceptable (for example, a pupil who is unable to form the 'th' sound and instead says 'fw' should have this scored correct).
- If a pupil makes an incorrect attempt and then corrects themselves, this should be marked as correct as the pupil has shown the ability to decode. However, pupils should not be prompted to 'have another go'. If a pupil makes several attempts at a word, the final attempt should be scored, even if this is incorrect and a previous attempt had been correct.
- You should not indicate whether a pupil has decoded a word correctly or incorrectly during the administration of the screening check but you may offer encouragement or support to ensure they remain focussed on the task.
- Pupils should be given as long as necessary to respond to a word, although in most cases, 10 seconds should be sufficient. The administrator should decide when it is appropriate to tell the pupil to move onto the next word, taking care not to try to move the pupil on if they are still trying to decode the word. It is acceptable for pupils to sound out the phonemes, as long as the pupil is then able to blend the word unprompted.

7.2 Reporting

In the pilot year, results for each pupil will not be available until after the standard setting process. In subsequent years, the intention is that schools will be informed of the number of marks a pupil has to achieve to be considered as having reached an appropriate standard of phonic decoding with the check materials.

In the pilot, schools will be expected to inform parents of the outcome for their child in relation to whether they have achieved the appropriate standard or not. We will explore with schools in the pilot what other information should be reported to parents. For example, whether parents should

be told which areas of decoding or reading their child needs to develop or how they can help at home.

During the pilot, item level data will be collected for analysis purposes, although it is unlikely that this will be collected for all pupils in subsequent years. Results from the pilot will not be included in RAISEonline, however, in future years the total score achieved on the check for each pupil will be included in RAISEonline.

Appendix A

Validity and reliability studies

1. Expert review

We will gather the opinions of a variety of experts on the following areas:

- Whether the designed check provides evidence of phonic decoding ability.
- Whether the check is similar to other assessments of phonic decoding.
- Whether the check aligns with various phonics programmes.
- The properties of a good assessment of phonics.

2. Phonics programme review

This project will review when particular grapheme-phoneme correspondences are introduced in a sample of phonics programmes to ascertain whether their assignment to section 1 or section 2 of the check is appropriate.

3. Internal check structure study

This study will examine the internal structure of the screening check, which means that it will attempt to confirm that the test is measuring the construct of decoding using phonics as desired.

4. Check re-check study

This project will investigate the relationship when two versions of the screening check are administered to a pupil within the same week in order to contribute to the reliability evidence.

5. Inter-rater study

In this project, three teachers will score each pupil's response to the screening check. The first teacher will score the pupils responses as the pupil takes the screening check. An audio recording of the pupil will be made during the administration and will then be scored by the other teachers separately.

Following the data analysis, and depending on the outcomes, a small group of teachers may be asked to carry out a 'think aloud' exercise, where they talk through the scoring of the checks where large discrepancies between ratings were found to attempt to determine the issue.

6. IRT assumption checking

There are three assumptions that need to be verified to ensure that the use of IRT is valid. These are:

- Unidimensionality
- Local independence
- Model fit

7. Live test analysis

A variety of analyses will be undertaken on the live test data to provide general statistics on test items and enable test construction to take place. The data will also be analysed by phonics programme used in the school to compare with the expert judgement evidence relating to the appropriateness of the check for a variety of phonics programmes.

8. SEN studies

It is important that the check is accessible to as many pupils as possible, and we will make all reasonable adjustments so that pupils with different types of SEN can access the check. We will analyse through the piloting how pupils with different types of SEN respond to the materials, and whether any of the reasonable adjustments affect how pupils perform on the check.

The nature of these studies is currently being determined with various organisations representing pupils with SEN. We will identify pupils with SEN from with the trial schools, and we are identifying additional pupils from schools outside the main sample to ensure that the pilot incorporates pupils with a range of SEN.

9. EAL analysis

We will make sure that at least 1000 pupils with EAL are included in the sample so that we can determine, in a statistically robust way, how this pupil group responds to the check. We will also gather qualitative information about whether pupils with particular first languages may encounter any individual issues.

10. Overarching validity and reliability report

This overarching report will be in two parts:

- The first part will pull together the evidence from the early studies that are available by September and should be sufficient to satisfy Ofqual of the validity and reliability of the test.
- The second part will be available following the further analyses and should expand on the initial evidence.

Appendix B

Constrained unigrams

The following unigrams will not be used at the start of words in the check:

- x

The following unigrams will not be used at the end of one-syllable words in the check:

- c
- j
- q
- v
- y

The following unigrams will not be used at the end of two-syllable words in the check:

- a
- i
- j
- o
- q
- u
- v

Constrained bigrams

The following bigrams will not be used in one-syllable words in the check:

- aa
- ae
- aj
- ao
- aq
- bc
- bd
- bf
- bg
- bh
- bj
- bk
- bm
- bn
- bp
- bq
- bv
- bw
- bx
- by
- bz
- cb
- cc
- cd
- cf
- cg
- cj
- cm
- cn
- cp
- cq
- cs
- cv
- cw
- cx
- cy
- cz
- db
- dc
- dd
- df
- dg
- dh
- dj
- dk
- dl
- dm
- dn
- dp
- dq
- dt
- dv
- dx
- dy
- dz
- ei
- ej
- eo
- eq
- ey
- fb
- fc
- fd
- fg
- fh
- fj
- fk
- fm
- fn
- fp
- fq
- fv
- fw
- fx
- fy
- fz
- gb
- gc
- gd
- gf
- gg
- gj
- gk
- gm
- gn
- gp
- gq
- gt
- gv
- gw
- gx
- gz
- hb
- hc
- hd
- hf
- hg
- hh
- hj
- hk
- hl
- hm
- hn
- hp
- hq
- hs
- hv
- hw
- hx
- hy
- hz
- jb
- jc
- jd
- jf
- jg
- jh
- jj
- jk
- jl
- jm
- jn
- jp
- jq
- jr
- js
- jt
- jv
- jw
- jx
- jy
- jz
- kb
- kc
- kd
- kf
- kg
- kh
- kj
- kk
- kl
- km
- kn
- kp
- kq
- kt
- kv
- kw
- kx
- ky
- kz
- lc
- lg
- lj
- ln
- lq
- lr
- lv
- lw
- lx
- ly
- lz
- mb
- mc
- md
- mf
- mg
- mh
- mj
- mk
- ml
- mn
- mq
- mr
- mt
- mv
- mw
- mx
- my
- mz
- nb
- nc
- nf
- nh
- nj
- nl
- nm
- nn
- np
- nq
- nr
- nv
- nw
- nx
- ny
- nz
- oj
- oq
- pb
- pc
- pd
- pf
- pg
- pj
- pk
- pm
- pn
- pp

- pq
- pv
- pw
- px
- py
- pz
- qa
- qb
- qc
- qd
- qe
- qf
- qg
- qh
- qi
- qj
- qk
- ql
- qm
- qn
- qo
- qp
- qq
- qr
- qs
- qt
- qv
- qw
- qx
- qy
- qz
- rf
- rh
- rj
- rl
- rq
- rv
- rw
- rx
- ry
- rz
- sb
- sd
- sf
- sg
- sj
- sr
- sv
- sx
- sy
- sz
- tb
- tc
- td
- tf
- tg
- tj
- tk
- tl
- tm
- tn
- tp
- tq
- tv
- tx
- ty
- tz
- uh
- uj
- uq
- uu
- uy
- vb
- vc
- vd
- vf
- vg
- vh
- vj
- vk
- vl
- vm
- vn
- vp
- vq
- vr
- vs
- vt
- vv
- vw
- vx
- vy
- vz
- wb
- wc
- wf
- wg
- wj
- wk
- wl
- wm
- wp
- wq
- wr
- wt
- wv
- ww
- wx
- wy
- wz
- xa
- xb
- xc
- xd
- xe
- xf
- xg
- xh
- xi
- xj
- xk
- xl
- xm
- xn
- xo
- xp
- xq
- xr
- xs
- xt
- xu
- xv
- xw
- xx
- xy
- xz
- yb
- yc
- yd
- yf
- yg
- yh
- yj
- yk
- yl
- ym
- yn
- yp
- yq
- yr
- ys
- yt
- yv
- yw
- yx
- yy
- yz
- zb
- zc
- zd
- zf
- zg
- zh
- zj
- zk
- zl
- zm
- zn
- zp
- zq
- zr
- zs
- zt
- zv
- zw
- zx
- zy
- zz

The following bigrams will not be used at the start of words in the check:

- bb
- ck
- cs
- ct
- ds
- ff
- fs
- ft
- gh
- gs
- ht
- ks
- lb
- ld
- lf
- lk
- ll
- lm
- lp
- ls
- lt
- mm
- mp
- ms
- nd
- ng
- nk
- ns
- nt
- pt
- rb
- rc
- rd
- rg
- rk
- rm
- rn
- rp
- rr
- rs
- rt
- ss
- ts
- ws

The following bigrams will not be used at the end of one-syllable words in the check:

- qu
- wh

The following bigrams will not be used at the end of two-syllable words in the check:

- ai
- ar
- au
- ea
- ew
- ie
- oa
- oe
- oi
- oo
- ou
- qu
- ur
- wh

The following VCV trigrams will not be used in split digraph words:

- ahe
- ehe
- ihe
- ohe
- uhe
- aje
- eje
- ije
- oje
- uje
- aqe
- eqe
- iqe
- oqe
- uqe
- are
- ere
- ire
- ore
- ure
- axe
- exe
- ixe
- oxe
- uxe

The following will be the only consonant clusters including a consonant digraph in the check (CCC):

- shr
- thr

The following will be the only consonant clusters including 3 consonants in the check (CCC):

- scr
- spl
- spr
- str

The following table shows the bigram frequencies to be used for one syllable words. These are adapted from the paper ‘Case-sensitive letter and bigram frequency counts from large-scale English copora’ by Michael N. Jones and D. J. K. Mewhort from Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

↓ Predecessor	Successor →																									
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
a	M	H	H	H	M	H	H	M	H	M	H	H	H	H	M	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	M
b	H	M	M	M	H	L	L	M	H	M	L	H	M	M	H	M	L	H	H	M	H	M	M	L	H	L
c	H	L	H	M	H	L	L	H	H	L	H	H	L	L	H	L	M	H	M	H	H	L	L	L	M	M
d	H	M	M	H	H	M	M	M	H	M	M	M	M	M	H	M	M	H	H	M	H	M	M	L	M	M
e	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	M	M	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	H	M
f	H	L	L	L	H	H	M	L	H	L	M	H	M	M	H	L	L	H	M	H	H	L	L	L	M	L
g	H	M	L	M	H	M	M	H	H	L	L	M	M	H	H	M	L	H	H	M	H	L	M	L	M	L
h	H	M	M	M	H	M	M	M	H	L	M	M	M	M	H	M	M	H	M	H	H	M	M	L	M	L
i	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	M	M	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	M	H	M	M	M	H
j	M	L	L	L	M	L	L	L	M	L	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	L
k	M	M	L	M	H	M	M	M	H	L	M	M	M	M	M	M	L	M	H	M	M	M	M	L	M	L
l	H	M	M	H	H	H	M	M	H	L	M	H	M	M	H	M	L	M	H	H	H	M	M	L	H	M
m	H	H	M	M	H	M	L	M	H	L	L	M	H	M	H	H	L	M	H	M	H	L	L	L	M	L
n	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	M	H	H	M	H	H	M	M	M	H	H	H	H	M	M	H	M
o	H	H	H	H	M	H	H	M	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	M	M	M
p	H	M	M	M	H	M	M	H	H	L	M	H	M	M	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	L	M	L	M	L
q	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	L
r	H	M	H	H	H	M	H	M	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	M	M	H	M
s	H	M	H	M	H	M	M	H	H	L	H	H	H	M	H	H	M	M	H	H	H	M	M	L	M	M
t	H	M	M	M	H	M	M	H	H	L	M	H	M	M	H	M	L	H	H	H	H	M	H	L	H	M
u	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	M	H	M	M	H	H	H	M	H	M	H	H	H	M	M	M	M	M	M
v	H	L	M	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	M	L	M	H	L	L	M	M	L	M	L	L	L	M	L
w	H	M	M	M	H	M	L	H	H	L	M	M	M	H	H	M	L	M	H	M	L	L	L	L	M	L
x	M	L	M	L	M	M	L	M	M	L	L	M	L	L	M	H	L	L	L	M	M	L	M	M	M	L
y	M	M	M	M	H	M	M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M	H	M	L	M	H	M	M	M	M	L	L	M
z	M	M	L	L	H	L	M	M	M	L	M	M	M	L	M	L	L	L	L	L	M	L	M	L	M	M

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